



The Save America's Pollinators Act of 2013

Congressman Earl Blumenauer • Third District of Oregon • www.blumenauer.house.gov

Background

Pollinators—including honeybees, bumble bees, butterflies, and other insects—play an important role in our farms, flower gardens, and food. In fact, some of the crops most important to Oregon's agricultural economy—blueberries, raspberries, cherries, apples, vegetable seed, squash—are reliant on bees for pollination and reproduction. More than 70% of America's food sources are pollinated by bees and the worldwide economic value of these crops is as high as \$200 billion a year.

America's bee population is struggling. During the last five years, beekeepers have lost more than 30% of their hives annually. While many factors are believed to contribute to this die-off, significant evidence links the use of a certain class of nicotine-derived pesticides, neonicotinoids, with bee die-offs. In 2013, the European Union significantly limited the use of neonicotinoids, citing concern about their impact on honeybee populations. That ban took effect April 29th and is valid for two years.

EPA Review Process

In 2006, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated a new process to reevaluate pesticides on a regular cycle. Each licensed pesticide is reviewed every fifteen years to confirm that it is being used safely and that its impacts on human health and the environment are properly assessed. Most neonicotinoids are scheduled to be reviewed in 2018.

Legislation

The Save America's Pollinators Act of 2013 directs the Environmental Protection Agency to suspend use of the most bee-toxic neonicotinoids for use in seed treatment, soil application, or foliar treatment on bee attractive plants within 180 days, and to review these neonicotinoids and make a new determination about their proper application and safe use. EPA is required to take all peer reviewed data into account when reviewing the use of these neonicotinoids, and to specifically account for any potential impact on the health and viability of pollinator populations.

Given the recent bee dieoffs in Hillsboro, Oregon and Wilsonville, Oregon and disturbing preliminary research on the impact of these pesticides, it is clear that they must be evaluated to ensure that their use does not pose an immediate threat to bee populations and the long-term viability of our farms. Until those determinations are made, we cannot risk the potential of putting our farms, food, and families in danger.

The Save America's Pollinators Act also instructs the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, to issue a report on the native bee populations in the United States, any decline in the population levels, and any potential causes of such decline.

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